



Arizona Association of Counties

Annual Counties at the Capitol Conference

Thursday, February 17, 2011
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thank you, Tim

And, good morning, everyone.

Let me begin by saying "thank you" for your early – and continued support during some very difficult times.

You were among the first to endorse my plans to address the budget crisis when I first took office. You publicly and strongly supported Proposition 100 – as well as our efforts in Washington seeking Medicaid relief and relief from the burdensome mandates of ObamaCare.

I've known many of you for years, so as a former County Supervisor I especially appreciate your efforts on my behalf. I'm one of you.

I understand how many decisions the state makes impact you and the essential services you provide on behalf of taxpayers.

I also know counties have been working since 2007 to adjust their budgets in response to the economic downturn. You've been reducing personnel, tapping financial reserves, eliminating non-mandated programs, and decreasing capital projects and road building.

We're ALL working to find affordable options in the pursuit of prosperity for the businesses and citizens of Arizona.

That's why on Monday, I called a Special Session of the Legislature to launch the ARIZONA COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE, a comprehensive bill that essentially marks the rebirth of Arizona.

Thanks to the hard work, dedication and diligence of President Pearce and Speaker Adams – The Competitiveness Package – passed yesterday afternoon, and I am signing it this evening.

It sets in place the first of my Four Cornerstones.

The Competitiveness Package includes codification of the Arizona Commerce Authority as a highly focused, highly privatized entity -- with a deal closing fund that our competitor states have.

It provides for replacing our state enterprise zone laws with immediate tax incentives for quality job creation -- statewide. And, it includes phased-in tax reform starting in 2014 to address those areas where we're not competitive with other states.

The Competitiveness Package will make Arizona a magnet for business expansion -- relocation -- capital formation -- and investment.

Focused on both urban and rural job creation, our agenda is based on a belief in the awesome power of free enterprise – private businesses finally freed to compete on the global stage.

That freedom also includes Arizona fighting to be cut loose from unconstitutional -- and unfunded healthcare mandates. It includes demanding that the federal government fulfill its constitutional and statutory duties to secure the border and restore integrity to our immigration system.

One way to help our local jurisdictions in their own growth and planning process is to free them from out-dated, unnecessary federal requirements.

The United States Supreme Court recently said local governments may petition to remove themselves from Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act -- the federal pre-clearance process.

Over 60 local jurisdictions in other states have done so -- successfully.

Together, with Secretary Ken Bennett and local jurisdictions in Arizona, we can reward those who've accomplished the mission of the Voting Rights Act and allow them to finally end the unnecessary, expensive, and burdensome federal Justice Department oversight of Arizona elections.

I'd like to applaud the recent efforts of Gila and Yavapai Counties, who've already begun this process -- and I encourage you to work with Secretary Bennett. Secretary Bennett and I are committed to helping the counties -- and other eligible local jurisdictions -- accomplish this goal.

Ronald Reagan reminded us that the extent of the problems that we face today is in direct proportion to the extent to which we have allowed the Federal Government to mushroom out of control.

Ignoring careful checks and balances, Federal bureaucrats now dictate where a community will build a bridge or lay a sewer system.

We've lost the sense of which problems require national solutions and which are best handled at the local level.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Every state is again divided into counties each to take care of what lies within its local bounds; each county again into townships or wards to manage (small) details ... were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want for bread."

If we chart a path to the freedom that Thomas Jefferson intended, Arizona will stand in shining contrast to other states -- as we limit the growth of the public sector and restrain unnecessary regulation, and stimulate the engine of free enterprise.

My primary agenda for the next four years will be dedicated to this approach -- and building on the other three Cornerstones of Reform: -- Education Reform -- State Government Reform -- specifically in State Budgeting and Operations and -- Renewed Federalism in our fight with Washington, D.C.

Now, you hear the naysayers, as well as I do. They're telling us to slow down. They're saying we're going too fast.

But, as I leave you today, I want you to know I have no intention of slowing down. This is not the time to be timid.

In fact, this is the time for boldness and courage!

I'm committed to these issues and their success, and I look to each of you to help where there's consensus.

May God bless you and your families and our Great State of Arizona.

And may God always bless and protect the United States of America.

Thank you.